

ADAPT Method for Overcoming Adversity

Whether it's unpredictable weather, extreme environments, disrupted travel, or navigation errors, ultra marathons are built on adversity. Your ability to manage and overcome adverse situations may well determine your success. ADAPT is an acronym developed by renowned ultra running coach Jason Koop to give ultra runners a step-by-step framework for dealing with adversity, during races and in training.

Accept

When shit hits the fan, pause. It doesn't matter if it's during a race or in training, if you've missed a turn or forgotten your passport, the first step is the same. Pause. Take a deep breath. Accept the situation for what it is. When stress occurs, it's easy to let emotions cloud your reason. Accepting the situation blunts emotion, leaving you more rational and clear-headed when deciding what steps to take next. Accept first, then you are ready to move forward.

Diagnose

Once the immediate pity party is over, it's time to assess what's actually going on. Don't attempt to solve any problems yet, just take a quick inventory of the issue(s). Because you have previously accepted the situation, this should be simple and to the point. (If you missed a turn, you're lost. If you forgot to collect your food from an aid station, you're going to be hungry).

Analyse

Now that you have a logical and accurate list of problems to solve, it's time to assess what can be done. What tools do you have at your disposal? If you're lost, do you have a map of the area that you can navigate back to the course with? If you forgot your food, do you have any emergency calories stashed in your pack? If you've taken the time to accept the situation and diagnose the actual issue(s), often you'll find that there are dozens of possible solutions.

Plan

Once you have a list of solutions, it's time to plan the action you want to take. If you plan to backtrack towards the turn you missed, determine how you'll check your progress so you don't end up more lost. If you have to soldier on to the next aid station with no food or fewer calories than you'd like, then what do you need to do when you arrive to get back on track?

Take Action

When you've accepted the situation, diagnosed the issue(s), analysed your options, and developed a plan, it's time to take action. Problems will not fix themselves. Once you have a plan, commit to carrying it out, and don't look back. If the situation changes again, just rinse and repeat the process from the beginning.